



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **SPRINGFIELD RESTAURANT OPERATORS PLEAD GUILTY TO HIRING, HARBORING ILLEGAL ALIENS**

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that the operators of the Taste of China restaurant in Springfield, Mo., pleaded guilty in federal court today to hiring illegal aliens and harboring them from detection.

**Sheng Chyuan Chen**, also known as Tony Chen, 46, and **Jeannette Ly Chen**, also known as Jeannette Ly, 47, each pleaded guilty in separate appearances this morning before U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr and U.S. Magistrate Judge James C. England, respectively, to separate but related charges contained in federal informations. They were originally charged together as co-defendants in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield on Dec. 18, 2003. Under the terms of today's plea agreement, that indictment will be dismissed at the time of their sentencing hearings, which have not yet been scheduled.

**Sheng Chyuan Chen**, a native of China, is president of LTCF, Inc., doing business as Taste of China, 935 N. Glenstone, Springfield. **Jeannette Ly Chen**, a native of Indochina, is the secretary of LTCF. The **Chens** are married and both are naturalized citizens of the United States.

By pleading guilty, Graves said, **Sheng Chen** admitted that on Dec. 16, 2003, he harbored two illegal aliens in a home located at 1710 E. Pythian in Springfield. **Sheng Chen** also agreed to forfeit his interest in that residential property, which was used to facilitate the crime of alien concealment, to the United States. The home, valued at \$60,500, is located near the Taste of China restaurant. **Sheng Chen** agreed to pay the United States \$30,250, which represents his interest in the property that is jointly owned with his wife.

By pleading guilty, Graves said, **Jeannette Chen** admitted that she hired five employees to work at Taste of China, knowing that they were unauthorized aliens. **Jeannette Chen** also admitted that this was part of a pattern of hiring illegal aliens for employment at the restaurant from August 2002 to Dec. 16, 2003.

Five illegal aliens were living at the E. Pythian residence rent-free while working at the restaurant, Graves said. A sixth illegal alien paid \$200 per month for rent while employed at an unrelated restaurant in Springfield. The **Chens** admitted they knew the five Taste of China employees were illegal aliens at the time of their hiring. Two of those aliens had been employed for more than one year, while the other three were employed more than one month but less than a year.

**Jeannette Chen** is responsible for maintaining employment records for Taste of China and participates with her husband in hiring individuals to work at the restaurant, Graves said. **Jeannette Chen** admitted that she has hired other illegal aliens at Taste of China prior to these five employees, knowing that they were not authorized to work at the restaurant.

Under federal statutes, **Sheng Chen** could be subject to a sentence of up to 10 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. His sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. **Jeannette Chen** could be subject to a sentence of up to six months in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$15,000. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigations by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas C. Bunch. It was investigated by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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